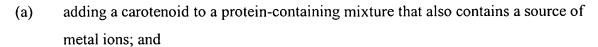
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We claim:

- 1. A method for forming a protein and carotenoid product, comprising the steps of:
- (a) preparing a solution of a carotenoid in a solvent;
- (b) adding a source of metal ions;
- (c) adding a source of protein; and
- (d) incubating the solution.

- 2. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the carotenoid comprises esters of hydroxyl- or carboxyl-containing carotenoid.
- 3. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the carotenoid is selected from the group comprising actinioerythrol, astaxanthin, bixin, canthaxanthin, capsanthin, capsorubin, -8'-apocarotenal (apo-carotenal), -12'-apo-carotenal, -carotene, -carotene, "carotene" (a mixture of and -carotenes), -carotene, -cryptoxanthin, lutein, lycopene, violerythrin, zeaxanthin, and esters of hydroxyl- or carboxyl-containing members thereof.
- 4. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the carotenoid comprises xanthophylls and esters of hydroxyl- or carboxyl-containing members thereof.
- 5. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the metal ions are selected from the group comprising Mg⁺⁺, Mn⁺⁺, Fe⁺⁺⁺, K⁺, and Ca⁺⁺.
- 6. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the solvent is selected from the group comprising tetrahydrofuran, methanol, ethanol, propylene glycol, methylene chloride, and isopropyl alcohol.
- 7. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the protein source is selected from the group comprising soybean proteins and isolates; albumin from various sources (i.e., bovine and chicken); whey proteins, concentrates and isolates; isoflavone containing protein products; corn germ proteins; oat flour; soybean proteinase inhibitors, comprising Kunitz, Bowman-Birk, and carboxypeptidase inhibitors; potato proteinase inhibitors and others; and hydrolyzed vegetable proteins.
- 8. A method as defined in claim 1, further comprising the step of drying to form a dry product containing the protein and carotenoid product.
 - 9. A method for forming a protein and carotenoid product, comprising the steps of:



- (b) incubating and heating the mixture.
- 10. A composition of a carotenoid and a protein, comprising a product formed by the method of claim 1.
- 11. A personal care composition, comprising a carotenoid and protein product of claim 10 added to a personal care product.
- 12. A beverage composition, comprising a carotenoid and protein product of claim 10 added to a beverage.
- 13. A food composition, comprising a carotenoid and protein product of claim 10 added to a food.
- 14. A composition of a carotenoid and a protein for addition to a food, beverage, or personal care product, comprising a product formed by the method of claim 1.
- 15. A method of supplementing a food, beverage, dietary supplement, or personal care product with a protein, a carotenoid, or both, comprising the step of adding to a food, beverage, or personal care product a carotenoid and protein product formed by the method of claim 1.